

Using the Looping Strategy to Brainstorm a Great Idea

WNY Young Writers' Studio

Loop and Zoom is a strategy that prompts writers to generate a great number of ideas, prioritize those that have the most potential, and dig into one with greater depth.

Procedure:

1. Use the first set of prompts below to help writers consider how their experiences can inform their work as writers. Provide one prompt, and then model how you might respond to it by telling a story. Then, pause to provide writing time. Writers should capture their ideas and stories without judgment.
2. Once you've given attention to each of the prompts below (or others, if you wish), invite writers to look over their lists and circle those that stir their emotions most.
3. Next, ask writers to choose ONE idea to play with for now.
4. Once writers have selected an idea, have them state it at the top of a new sheet of paper. Use the second set of prompts below to help them consider how they may want to develop this idea. Provide one prompt, and then model how you might respond to it by telling a story. Pause again to provide writing time. Again, writers should work without judgment.
5. Finally, provide writers about 20-30 minutes to begin drafting. Then, ask them to look back over their work and circle one person, place, or thing that requires greater detail.
6. Model how writers can "zoom" in on the subject and describe its finer details in much the same way we zoom in on the subjects we photograph in order to capture sharper detail.

Set 1:

1. When you were very young, who did you spend the most time with? Consider your family members, teachers, day care providers, neighbors, friends, others in your community, or even unique characters who didn't seem to play a huge role in your life, but who you remember seeing often.
2. Where did you spend the most time? Which spaces inside of your home or on your property? Which far away places? Secret hide aways? Favorite play spots? Homes of friends and family members? Places in your community?
3. What were the best things that happened to you?

4. Where did you feel safest?
5. What were the worst things that happened to you?
6. What frightened you most?
7. When did you first realize how strong you were?
8. When did you first realize how different you were?
9. Where did you feel a sense of belonging?
10. Where did you feel most alone?
11. What injustices do you notice in the world?
12. If you could make a difference in any way for any one, what would it be?
13. What kinds of writing are your favorites? If you were to write pieces like these, what would they be about?

Set 2:

1. What story is most important to tell about your subject?
2. Who is it most important to tell this story to?
3. How would you need to tell it, in order to make this subject interesting to your audience?
4. Use your senses to describe your subject.....capture what you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel.